

The **Ornament for Clear Realization** describes the ten topics of the ten Mahayana practice instructions in two verses:

*Practice, the truths,
The three jewels such as the Buddha,
Non-involvement, tirelessness,
Thoroughly upholding the path, [22]*

*The five visions, clairvoyance's
Six qualities and what are called "the paths of seeing
And meditation": these practice instructions
Should be known as having a tenfold character. [23]*

Bodhisattvas on the path of accumulation should now listen, contemplate and meditate on the Mahayana practice instructions. This will enhance their practice and their progress on the path to enlightenment.

These practice instructions should be known as having a tenfold character since they describe the following ten topics:

1. The two truths: the two truths are explained in order to understand the nature and the aspect of **practice**
2. The four noble truths: **the four noble truths** are the focal object of practice
3. Going for refuge: going for refuge to **the three jewels such as the Buddha** and so forth serves as the basis of one's practice
4. The diligence of non-involvement: the diligence of **non-involvement** counteracts the laziness of engaging in non-virtuous actions and assists practitioners in stabilizing their practice
5. The diligence of tirelessness: the diligence of **tirelessness** counteracts the laziness of sloth/procrastination and assists practitioners in increasing their practice
6. The diligence of thoroughly upholding the path of practice: the diligence of **thoroughly upholding the path** of practice counteracts the laziness of self-contempt/faintheartedness and assists practitioners in averting the deterioration of their practice
7. The five visions: the five visions are special powers that practitioners need in order to become more self-sufficient
8. The six clairvoyances: **clairvoyance's six qualities**, i.e. the six types of clairvoyance, are needed in order to quickly complete the accumulation of merit
9. The path of seeing: practitioners on the **path of seeing** have newly cultivated the meditative absorption directly realizing emptiness. The principal function of this meditative absorption is to permanently eliminate the *intellectually acquired* ignorance etc.
10. The path of meditation: practitioners on the **path of meditation** have achieved the cessation of the intellectually acquired ignorance etc. and their meditative absorption directly realizing emptiness now eliminates the *innate* ignorance etc.

The first three topics (the two truths, the four noble truths, and going for refuge) are from the point of view of practice itself; the next three topics (the three types of diligence) are from the point of view of avoiding the manifestation of negativities in the continua of practitioners; the following two topics (the five kinds of vision and the six clairvoyances) are from the point of view of increasing the practitioners' qualities, and the last two topics (the path of seeing and the path of meditation) are from the point of view of permanently eliminating negativities in the continua of practitioners.

Two Truths

As explained earlier, of the ten Mahayana practice instructions the first instruction is on the two truths in order for practitioners to understand the nature and aspect of practice.

The two truths are:

1. Conventional/relative/obscurational truth
2. Ultimate truth

1. Conventional/relative/obscuration truth

Tibetan: ཀུན་ཇོབ་དབེན་པ། - *Kuen Dzob Den pa*

(*Kuen* = thoroughly/everything/all, *Dzob* = conceal/ obscure/hide, *Den pa* = truth/reality)

Etymology of conventional truth:

The etymology of conventional truth is *truth for a thorough concealer*. A *thorough concealer* is an ignorance apprehending a phenomenon to exist truly. E.g. an ignorance apprehending a pot to truly exist is a *thorough concealer* because it thoroughly conceals the real nature of the pot -- the pot's emptiness of true existence. Further, even though the pot is not a *truth* it is a *truth for* that *thorough concealer*, i.e. for the ignorance apprehending the pot to truly exist. Therefore, the pot is a conventional truth because it is a *truth for a thorough concealer*.

The Pot is not a *truth* because it does not exist the way it appears to sentient beings' direct perceptions. This means there is a disparity between the way the pot appears to those direct perceptions and the way it actually exists. When the pot appears to sentient beings' direct perception it appears as truly existent. However, this appearance does not accord with the actual mode of existence of the pot since the pot lacks such true existence.

Instances of conventional truth

All impermanent phenomena such as consciousnesses, actions, colors, shapes, sounds, smells, and so forth as well as permanent phenomena other than emptinesses are conventional truths.

2. Ultimate truth

Tibetan: དོན་དམ་དབེན་པ། - *Doen Dam Den pa* (*Doen* = meaning/ object/function/fact,

dam (pa) = supreme/highest/excellent, *Den pa* = truth/reality)

Etymology of ultimate truth

There are two etymologies of ultimate truth:

- One etymology of ultimate truth is *truth for the supreme meaning*. Here *supreme meaning* refers to the meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness. E.g. the pot's emptiness of true existence is a *truth* for the meditative equipoise directly realizing the pot's emptiness because the pot's emptiness of true existence is directly realized by that meditative equipoise. Further, the meditative equipoise directly realizing the pot's emptiness of true existence is a *supreme meaning* because it directly realizes the ultimate mode of existence of pot and thus serves as the antidote to ignorance, anger, attachment etc.
- Another etymology of ultimate truth is *supreme object truth*. The pot's lack of true existence is a *supreme object truth* because it is both, a *supreme object* and a *truth*. The pot's lack of true existence is a *supreme object* because it is the principal object of the meditative equipoise directly realizing the pot's emptiness and its realization serves as the antidote to ignorance, anger, attachment and so forth. Further, the pot's lack of true existence is a *truth* because it exists the way it appears to sentient beings' direct perception. The direct perceiver (in sentient beings' continua) that directly realizes the pot's emptiness of true existence is a meditative equipoise that directly realizes the emptiness of all phenomena. Therefore, this meditative equipoise directly realizes pot's lack of true existence, pillar's lack of true existence, consciousness' lack of true existence, pot's emptiness' lack of true existence and so forth. When it directly realizes e.g. the pot's lack of true existence the pot's lack of true existence appears to it. However, the pot's lack of true existence does not appear as truly existent but as lacking true existence. Thus, there is no disparity between the way the pot's lack of true existence exists and the way it appears to sentient beings' direct perception.

Instances of ultimate truth

The emptinesses, i.e. the lack of true existence, of all phenomena (including emptiness itself) are the instances of ultimate truth. Therefore, pots' emptiness of true existence, consciousness' emptiness of true existence, action's emptiness of true existence, color's emptiness of true existence, emptiness' emptiness of true existence, etc. are all ultimate truths.

